

ANGLICAN PASTORS WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD

August 27, 1999 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org) - The British Broadcasting Corporation recently reported that there are vicars in the Church of England who do not believe in God (BBC, "Vicars who don't believe in God," July 13, 1999). Some of these are members of the Sea of Faith, an organization in the United Kingdom that claims that religion is a "human creation." Some of the members also claim that God is a man-made myth. According to a Sea of Faith spokesman, roughly 50 Anglican vicars are members of the organization, along with some Catholic priests and members of other denominations and non-Christian religions. One of the Anglicans who do not believe in God is Ronald Pearse, a retired priest. He said religion is people's attempt to "try to reach an understanding of themselves, the universe and maybe God, if God is a relevant word to them individually."

Some within the Church of England are proposing to restore heresy tribunals to take action against the atheistic/agnostic vicars, but don't hold your breathe until it happens. The last heresy trial in the Church of England was in 1847.

The Church of England is literally filled with unbelief and apostasy of the most vicious sort. While traveling through London in 1982, I picked up a copy of a newspaper containing an interview by John Mortiner of the Sunday Times with then Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie. It was Easter, and the interviewer asked Runcie if he understood why Christ had to suffer. The Archbishop replied, "As to that I am an agnostic." He did not know for certain why Christ died on the cross! The interviewer asked, "Is God a judge?" Runcie replied, "No." The interviewer then said, "So you don't see God as celestial Lord Chief Justice?" Runcie said, "Not at all. I had an old landlady when we were at Oxford. And when we got into any sort of trouble, she'd say: 'There's one above who seeth all'. I can't think of God like that." Mortiner then asked Runcie if God accepts people of other religions, and Runcie had this reply: "I can't believe in a God who only saves people who live in certain latitudes. I used to lecture to Hellenic cruises about [Islamic] mosques, and I found great spiritual values in them."

Runcie's unbelief is typical of the Church of England today. Large numbers of Anglican priests and bishops are Modernists who deny the Word of God, and there is a massive homosexual movement within the Church of England. When the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1997 at the Anglican Southwark Cathedral, more than 2,000 assembled to show their support. One can find every sort of strange unscriptural thing in Anglican churches today. In one newspaper I read while in London in late March of 1997 a well-known secular reporter described his visit to an Anglican church on Easter Sunday. He said he went to see if it was still as boring as he remembered it being when he was young. The service featured songs by the Spice Girls, a popular and immoral female British rock group. The audience was asked trivia questions about this group and their music. The speaker then said the first Spice Girls were Mary and Martha who brought spices to Christ's empty tomb! This wicked nonsense is typical of Anglicanism today. In 1996, the Anglican doctrinal commission reported that Hell is not a place of eternal fiery torment. The present Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, glories in the Church of England's diversity. In 1996 he stated: "Anglicanism at its very best can hold differences of thought together. Catholicism, evangelicalism, charismaticism, and liberalism all contribute" (Calvary Contender, July 1, 1996).

Anglican bishop David Jenkins (now retired) openly questions every major teaching of the Bible. Of Christ's resurrection, this Church of England bishop said, "The Christian is not bound up with freak biology or corpses getting up and walking around." Of Christ's virgin birth, Jenkins said, "As for the virgin birth, they're the sort of stories that get told after you already believe somebody is very important. You don't have to believe in the virgin birth..." His heretical doctrines were widely

protested, but he was not disciplined. There are large numbers of Anglican leaders who share Jenkins modernistic views.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, the American arm of the Anglican denomination, is just as apostate as its British counterpart. More than half a century ago, Episcopal Bishop James Pike denied all of the major tenants of the Christian faith. Pike was a rank, unbelieving Modernist, a drunkard, an adulterer. He denied the Trinity and refused to state the traditional benediction, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen!" He abbreviated this to "In the name of God, Amen!" Three times Pike was brought up on heresy charges in the Episcopal Church. In an article in Look magazine Pike stated that he did not believe the fundamentals of the faith. In a pastoral letter that was to be read in all the Episcopal Churches of his diocese, Pike stated that "religious myth is one of the avenues of faith and has an important place in the communication of the Gospel." He spoke of the "myth of the Garden of Eden." He said, "The virgin birth... is a myth which churchmen should be free to accept or reject." In an article in Christian Century, Dec. 21, 1960, Pike declared that he no longer believed the doctrines stated in the Apostles' Creed. Three times Pike was picked up by San Francisco police while he was wandering around in a drunken, confused state late at night. He spent four years in intensive psychoanalysis. Pike was twice divorced, thrice married, and had at least three mistresses. One of his mistresses committed suicide; one of his daughters attempted suicide. His eldest son committed suicide in 1966 at age 20 (associated with his homosexuality), and Pike got deeply involved in the occult in an attempt to communicate with the deceased. Three years later Pike died from a 70-foot fall in a remote canyon in the Israeli desert near the Dead Sea. His maggot infested body was found five days later. The 56-year-old theologian had gotten lost in the desert while on an extended honeymoon with his 31-year-old third wife. A biography about Pike noted that "never before in the history of the Episcopal Church had a Solemn Requiem Mass been offered for a bishop in the presence of three surviving wives" (The Death and Life of Bishop Pike, p. 202).

In 1996, Episcopal Bishop John Spong of New Jersey (who has since retired) has gone to the outer limits in heretical theology. He stated in his diocesan newspaper, The Voice, that Darwin's evolutionary theory has "destroyed forever the power of the traditional Christian myth" (Ecumenical News Service, Dec. 6, 1996). Spong said that one could be a Christian without being a theist because the image of God in the Bible "is no longer operative."

After worshiping in a Buddhist temple in 1988, Spong said, "As the smell of incense filled the air, I knelt before three images of the Buddha, feeling that the smoke could carry my prayers heavenward. It was for me a holy moment for I was certain that I was kneeling on holy ground. ... My conviction is that the true God, the divine mystery, the essence of holiness, is within and beyond all of these ancient worship traditions. ... when I visit a Buddhist temple it is not for me a pagan place ... It is rather a holy place where human beings different from me have felt the presence of God. ... I will not make any further attempt to convert the Buddhist, the Jew, the Hindu or the Moslem. I am content to learn from them and to walk with them side by side toward the God who lives, I believe, beyond the images that bind and blind us all" (John Spong, Bishop of Newark, "A dialogue in a Buddhist temple," The Voice, Jan. 1989). In Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism, Spong states, "Am I suggesting that these stories of the virgin birth are not literally true? The answer is a simple and direct 'Yes.' Of course these narratives are not literally true. Stars do not wander, angels do not sing, virgins do not give birth, magi do not travel to a distant land to present gifts to a baby, and shepherds do not go in search of a newborn savior."

In 1985, the St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis ran an advertising campaign that included this slogan: "The Episcopal Church welcomes you. Regardless of race, creed, color or the number of times you've been born." Twenty Episcopal churches in the Memphis, Tennessee, area ran an advertisement which stated, "In an atmosphere of absolute right and wrongs, here's a little room to breathe. ... the Episcopal Church is totally committed to the preservation of open dialogue and undogmatic faith. We exist to tell the world about a God who loves us regardless of what we've

done or what we believe. Even if we do not believe in Him, He believes in us. We do not suffocate with absolutes.”

This, of course, is not biblical Christianity; it is gross apostasy.